

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Getting kids into the water

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Most of the kids entered the water with eager anticipation, net in hand, happily getting their shoes and shorts wet while adult not only looked on, but encouraged them to explore the river. It was the second annual Toe River Valley Festival, an event that brought nearly every 5th grader in North Carolina's Yancey and Mitchell County's out into a river in their community.

The festival came on the heels of the Haywood County Kids in the Creek event, sponsored by the Haywood Waterways Association, which brings every 8th grade student in Haywood County out to explore the Pigeon River.

Increasingly across the Southern Appalachians, it seems students are having more and more opportunities to get outside and become acquainted with streams in their communities. I think many of us have memories of plying area streams as children, searching for crayfish, engineering mini-dams or keeping an eye out for a lounging snake.

Water issues are becoming more and more prominent in the Southern Appalachians – from erratic precipitation and water supply needs, to protecting water quality and with-it rich biodiversity and economic drivers like fishing, paddling and tourism. We need to ensure we have a citizenry that is literate in water issues and fundamental to that is spurring a connection and interest in the streams of our communities.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peebles.